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THE BULLETIN

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

April 1994
Vol. 47 No. 8



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A new series celebrating the
accomplishments of

AFRICAN-AMERICAN ARTISTS AND ARTISANS

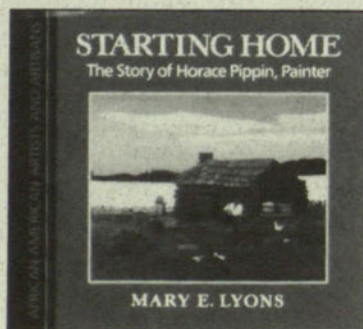
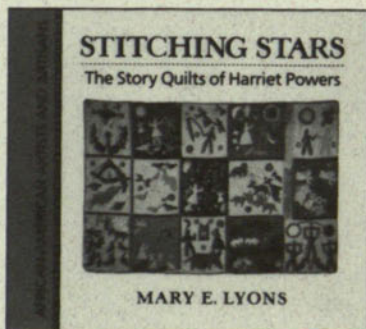
By **Mary E. Lyons**

Illustrated with full-color and black-and-white photographs

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T H E B U L L E T I N

OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

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EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED WITH REVIEWS

*	Asterisks denote books of special distinction.
R	Recommended.
Ad	Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.
M	Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.
NR	Not recommended.
SpC	Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.
SpR	A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.

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THE BIG PICTURE

*Making Friends with Frankenstein: A Book of
Monstrous Poems and Pictures*

written and illustrated by Colin McNaughton

Contemporary poetry for children is fortunate in its many voices: the lyricism of Myra Cohn Livingston and Constance Levy, the zest of Jack Prelutsky and Dennis Lee, the rhythmic snap of J. Patrick Lewis. That's just a few among the many—but is there any room left for the enthusiastically disgusting?

Cockroach sandwich
For my lunch,
Hate the taste
But love the crunch!

"Cockroach Sandwich," the opening quatrain of McNaughton's new collection, certainly sets the tone, and visually, the portrait of the grizzled old man with cockroaches running out of his mouth adds a certain statement of its own.

Cheerfully gross and often witty, the poems in *Making Friends with Frankenstein* often sound a folkloric ring akin to those playground and afterschool rhymes kids make up for themselves. Three notable recent books have collected those: the Opies' *I Saw Esau* (BCCB 5/92), Alvin Schwartz's *And the Green Grass Grows All Round* (5/92) and David Booth's *Doctor Knickerbocker* (9/93). While the rhymes are authentic, the presentations are institutionalized. Despite some naughty bits in Maurice Sendak's illustrations for *I Saw Esau*, the book has a slyly sedate look to it; both *The Green Grass* and *Doctor Knickerbocker* would be at home in the story hour hands of a teacher or librarian. *Making Friends with Frankenstein*, though not from the oral tradition and written by a single poet, keeps alive the rude delight children often bring to language, whether in playground insults ("Airhead, doughbrain, pizza face,/ Reject from the human race"—from "Another Poem to Send to Your Worst Enemy"), stupid puns ("Sons and daughters,/ Nephews and nieces,/ The monster is dead—/May he rest in pieces"—"Frankenstein's Monster Is Finally Dead!") or gross-out noises ("Slobber, chomp, slurp, gulp! BLEARRGGHHOOOWOURGHH!!!"—"A Pound of Gummy Babies").

The illustration for the last shows a greedy pig-child vomiting gummy bits and a barrage of yellow mucus; not your thing or my thing, certainly, but kids will, all right, eat it up (as they will the poem about the bogeyman, who "gets right up my nose"). Unlike many children's books which pander to juvenile tastes, all the while barely concealing their adult authority, this one feels unmediated and

unrepentant, with the last poem being a haiku-short "Farewell to Dracula": "So long,/ Sucker!" The book isn't afraid of anything and, along with its ego-puffing putdowns, offers kids their own chants to be brave, particularly spells against bullies. "Yah, Boo, Hiss," pictured on this month's *Bulletin* cover, finds for kids a friend ("Yah, boo, hiss/ To all of you!! My best friend/ Is nine foot two!") and throughout, various cyclopes, the Frankenstein monster, Quasimodo, and aliens from space face defeat. Strong measures require strong words, and McNaughton doesn't hesitate to say them.

But what do kids get here that they won't get on the playground? Pictures, for one thing, large-scaled, literal-minded, and highly funny pen-and-watercolor portraits that accompany the burlesque with competitive vigor and that have plenty of shut-the-book-here-comes-teacher vulgarity. There are also plenty of readaloud possibilities—for them, not you. Best of all is the generous sense of personality that bounces through the book. While not all of the poems quite succeed (although McNaughton's "The Forth Worst Pome Wot I Ever Ritted" is actually a deconstructionist's masterpiece), taken together they have a rounded joviality that shows how a single sense of humor can wander down many paths. Kids will enjoy the stroll. So will you.

Roger Sutton, Executive Editor



NEW BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ACKERMAN, KAREN *The Night Crossing*; illus. by Elizabeth Sayles. Knopf, 1994 [64p]

ISBN 0-679-83169-X \$14.00

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 3-5

"We must leave Austria now, before it is too late," Clara hears her father whisper one night in 1938, and shortly thereafter he sells all their valuables except a pair of antique family candlesticks, which Mama sews into Clara's older sister Marta's petticoat. All Clara takes are some hair ribbons, a small mirror, the two dolls her grandmother carried in flight from a Russian pogrom, and the memory of her best friend screaming at her with a crowd of other children in the street: *Juden, Juden*. Walking by night from Innsbruck to the Swiss border entails several close calls, but the most dangerous moment comes with the crossing itself, when Clara suggests hiding the clanking silver candlesticks inside her old dolls and then smoothly convinces the Nazi borderguard to believe their false papers: she claims that Mama made her leave her good dolls at home in Switzerland, to which the family pretends to be returning after a visit with Austrian relatives. An epilogue, which seems oddly out of joint in extending a piece of fiction, describes how the family eventually settle in England and learn that their relatives have disappeared in the Holocaust. The story seems self-consciously tailored to a young audience, with telescoped action, role-defined characters, and restricted background. It is never-

theless realistically child-centered, and the selective scope allows intense focus, within circumscribed limits, for those who have moved beyond picture book accounts such as Shulamith Levey Oppenheim's *The Lily Cupboard* (BCCB 3/92) but aren't ready for the shocking facts of Isabella Leitner's *The Big Lie* (BCCB 1/93). Reviewed from an unillustrated galley. BH

ADA, ALMA FLOR *Dear Peter Rabbit*; illus. by Leslie Tryon. Atheneum, 1994 32p

ISBN 0-689-31850-2 \$14.95

Spanish ed. *Querido Pedrín* ISBN 0-689-31915-0 \$14.95 R 6-9 yrs

What's going on here with all this clever deconstructing of favorite fairy tales? The Ahlbergs (with *The Jolly Postman* and *Ten in a Bed*), Scieszka and Smith (*The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* and *The Stinky Cheese Man*), Trivizas and Oxenbury (*The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*) and many others are taking a new look at old tales, shifting allegiances, subverting endings, and introducing the most unlikely characters to each other. Like *The Jolly Postman*, *Dear Peter Rabbit* exchanges letters, here between Pig One and Peter Rabbit, as well as between Goldilocks (McGregor) and Baby Bear; a closing party brings everybody together, as well as occasioning a letter from Little Red Riding Hood: "Dear Grandma . . . Goldilocks has very interesting friends." Ada's book is as clever as most in the genre, and kids will enjoy putting together the narrative pieces from the various stories. Leslie Tryon's observant and fully-packed line-and-watercolor paintings have a romantic tone that softens the edges of the gimmick. John Barth has called parody "the literature of exhaustion," and this particular trend in children's books will probably wear itself out fairly quickly. So—where do we go from here? RS

ANDERSON, JANET S. *The Key into Winter*; illus. by David Soman. Whitman, 1994 [32p]

ISBN 0-8075-4170-2 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 5-8 yrs

A story within a story with mythic overtones, this opens on a cozy scene of Clara in her mama's lap with Grandmother nearby. These three belong to a line of women who control the keys to each season, and Mama recalls trying, as a child, to stop time by throwing the key to winter into the burning wood stove so that her own aged grandmother would not die. Christmas does not come, the snows do not fall, and the child (Mama) realizes that there will never be a chance for her grandmother's "one more spring." It's not till her mother helps her retrieve the crystal key from the flames, where it glows with white heat, that the women turn the key and restore nature to its cycles. The watercolor paintings generate a warm radiance in firelit scenes, contrasted energetically with icy blue spreads. The characters are African American, never remarked on in the text but expressively portrayed in the art. Text and pictures together exert an unexpected and slightly mysterious power; share this one alongside Miska Miles' *Annie and the Old One* (BCCB 12/71). BH

ARCHBOLD, RICK *Deep-Sea Explorer: The Story of Robert Ballard, Discoverer of the Titanic*. Scholastic, 1994 144p illus. with photographs

ISBN 0-590-47232-1 \$13.95

R Gr. 5-7

Probably the most dramatic underwater images of the last ten years come not from Hollywood sci-fi special effects but from Robert Ballard's videotaped encounter

with the Titanic's long-submerged hulk on the ocean floor. Archbold, who collaborated with Ballard on a previous children's book (*Exploring the Bismarck*), chronicles the oceanographer's boyhood in California, his work for the Navy, his attachment to the group that introduced the extensive use of the *Alvin* submersible for undersea study, and his landmark discoveries via submersible and remote camera. The author tends to list facts rather than convey Ballard's personal life (we don't really need the name of his high school girlfriend, and what ever happens to his beloved sister?), but the treatment of his marine work is clear and exciting as it details life-threatening underwater snags, knotty technological problems, and suspenseful hunts for shipwrecks. Chock-full of black-and-white photographs, this could be an interesting partner to Macaulay's *Ship* (BCCB 11/93), and it won't hurt the book's popularity that the hero is adventurous and photogenic (as well, apparently, as being the model for the hero of the TV series *Seaquest DSV*). There are no notes, but a bibliography (which oddly does not include Ballard's adult book on his discovery), an index, and a glossary are included. DS

AUCH, MARY JANE *The Latchkey Dog*; illus. by Cat Bowman Smith. Little, 1994 120p
ISBN 0-316-05916-1 \$13.95 R Gr. 4-6

Eight-year-old Sam is determined to keep his dog in spite of a neighbor's angry objection that Amber barks all day long. Since his parents' divorce, Mom has had to go back to work—and Amber's not the only one who misses the way things used to be. It sounds like a serious situation, but it takes on sit-com proportions as Sam makes various agonizingly impossible attempts to give Amber to the neighbor's Alzheimer-afflicted husband, to quiet Amber with the company of a cat, and to reprogram Amber to sleep during the day and stay up all night. Something finally works out, a believable combination of the predictable and the unexpected, both of which involve lots of work and even a little sacrifice on the part of Sam. Amber becomes a children's and senior citizens' day-care companion part of the time (Sam has to be there to oversee her instead of going to the Y program), Mom arranges to work at home more, and Sam's best friend's father gets over his dog phobia enough to take on Amber the rest of the time. Illustrated with casual, squiggly-lined, pen-and-ink drawings, Auch's text maintains a natural simplicity of style. What could have been simply formulaic is instead rendered funny by the quick dialogue and quirky characters, not the least of whom is Amber, who can never catch a frisbee but manages to snatch a frozen steak midair. Ribsy fans will eat this one up. BH

BAKER, BARBARA *Staying with Grandmother*; illus. by Judith Byron Schachner. Dutton, 1994 48p
ISBN 0-525-44603-6 \$12.99 Ad Gr. K-2

Clair is immediately homesick when her parents drop her off for a visit (length of time unspecified) with Grandmother. After dinner, Grandmother takes Clair to visit a special friend of hers, who turns out to be a little girl who invites Clair to play the next day. Crisis resolved. Both story and tone in this beginning-to-read book are static ("We have macaroni and cheese. It is good. But I like the way my mother makes it better. She puts in more cheese"), and doleful little Clair's problem is going to seem babyish to kids learning to read on their own. The book might have been more successfully conceptualized as a picture book, and Schachner's line-and-watercolor illustrations have a sweet, cozy appeal that would be just right for a bedtime story. RS

BAT-AMI, MIRIAM *When the Frost Is Gone*; illus. by Marcy Dunn Ramsey. Macmillan, 1994 [64p]
 ISBN 0-02-708497-3 \$13.95
 Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 5-7

"I must have been twelve years old for a hundred thousand years. Waiting." Natalie's last summer before adolescence is a time of trials, including the sporadic reappearance of her drug-addicted mother and the departure of Natalie's best friend Tasha after Tasha's house burns down. The theme of friendship is the best focused in this sparsely developed novel, which features many flashes of observant writing, but just as often relies on elliptical references or even just ellipses to fill in gaps or make transitions: "I didn't want her looking down at me—it felt . . . I can't explain it." Yet there is more explanation than action here and not enough sustained scene-building to anchor the protagonist's intense emotions. The scenes that are realized in detail work beautifully: a neighborhood porch gathering, for instance, when Tasha's grandmother announces she has just paid off her mortgage, is very moving; the struggle between Natalie and her mother over eating scrambled eggs for breakfast conveys real tension; and the Italian stonemason next door to Natalie invariably effects a strong presence. Other elements, such as a dog's killing its puppies, appear and disappear as free-floating symbols without being well-integrated into the world of the novel. Although the book tries to do too much in too little space, especially in dealing with the main character's complex family situation, kids will get involved in the relationship between troubled Natalie and her confident African-American friend Tasha. Reviewed from an unillustrated galley. BH

BAUER, MARION DANE, comp. *Am I Blue?: Coming Out from the Silence*. HarperCollins, 1994 [224p]
 Library ed. ISBN 0-06-024254-X \$14.89
 Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-024253-1 \$15.00
 Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 8-12

The presence of a pink triangle in the otherwise unrevealing cover art will probably clue gay and lesbian teens into the fact that this is an anthology about them; straight readers might be pulled in by the presence of several popular writers, among them Francesca Lia Block, William Sleator, and Jane Yolen. All but a couple of the sixteen stories (all newly written for the collection) feature gay or lesbian teen protagonists whose discovery, confirmation, or public admission of their homosexuality provides the heart of the fiction; the exceptions, such as Lois Lowry's "Holding," show teens in relation to gay adults in their lives. A few of the stories are pretentious, and others are in the breezy-to-read style popularized by Don Gallo's various YA collections (*Sixteen*, etc.), but the best are focused, intense, and even sexy, as in editor Bauer's "Dancing Backward," about two girls who discover sexual love in a boarding school, and James Giblin's "Three Mondays in July," in which a boy is drawn to a kind—and naked—stranger on a beach. In these two stories, as well as several of the others, there is a welcome rejection of problem-novel theatrics and prescriptions, and the collection as a whole rejects the stereotype that being gay is something one "decides" rather than something one (and others) learns to accept. Brief—and considering the book's subtitle, *Coming Out from the Silence*, generally reticent—autobiographical essays follow each story. RS

BERMAN, AVIS *James McNeill Whistler*. Abrams, 1993 92p illus. with photographs (First Impressions)
ISBN 0-8109-3968-1 \$19.95 R Gr. 7-12

GREENFELD, HOWARD *Paul Gauguin*. Abrams, 1993 92p illus. with photographs (First Impressions)
ISBN 0-8109-3376-4 \$19.95 Ad Gr. 7-12

Whistler follows the life of the tempestuous and witty Mr. Whistler from his peripatetic childhood through his artistic career and multitudinous feuds. *Gauguin* examines the iconoclastic artist's search for tropical paradise and struggle for artistic recognition. Although inexplicably lacking source notes, both books are filled with attractive black-and-white and color reproductions including an extended fold-out page particularly successful in showing oversized works. Although competent and detailed, the text in *Gauguin* is flat and occasionally awkward, and the book a report rather than an examination of a life; the black-bordered format is somewhat constrictive, and some textual inconsistencies (the use of *Symbolism* and *Syncretism*, for example) seem to have slipped by the editor as well. Berman's text for *Whistler*, however, is chatty and readable, fleshing out the character of Whistler as well as describing in clear and concise terms his techniques and philosophies—readers familiar only with his ubiquitous mother ("Arrangement in Grey and Black") will enjoy their encounter with a magnetic man and some of his less famous but still significant work. Both books are well-illustrated accounts of important figures in art history, and they'll be useful for their substantive attention to significant individuals. DS

BIERHORST, JOHN *The Way of the Earth: Native America and the Environment*. Morrow, 1994 [336p] illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-688-11560-8 \$15.00
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 9 up

Even more far-reaching than Bierhorst's mythologies of South America (BCCB 6/88) and North America, this explores the environmental attitudes and practices of Native Americans on both continents. The first section discusses the personalizing of natural forces and creatures, the second explains attributions of human kinship with nature, the third deals with restraint in consuming natural products, the fourth examines death as a balance of natural cycles, and the last considers renewal in the face of destruction. Eschewing adulatory, sentimental clichés of the noble savage, Bierhorst emphasizes the complex variations among myriad Indian peoples, citing elements of myth and ritual to illustrate the cultural concerns, social motivations, and physical or geographical elements shaping their relationships with the earth they loved, feared, and most of all, respected. "We Indians have been put here [to be] like the wilds and we cooperate with them," Black Elk is quoted. The questions of how and why that cooperation works requires a wide-ranging, detailed analysis. Bierhorst's arguments are subtle, gathering force through a gradual accumulation of examples that will daunt most young readers but reward those who become involved in his anthropologically meticulous study. A section of notes includes citations to all sources, and an extensive bibliography will lead students to further reading. The format is varied with depictions of Indian art and artifacts, while parables from different folkloric traditions are set off from the text. A synthesis of rare integrity, this will prove valuable for research, reference, or informational browsing. BH

BOELTS, MARIBETH *Dry Days, Wet Nights*; illus. by Kathy Parkinson. Whitman, 1994 [32p]
 ISBN 0-8075-1723-2 \$13.95
 Reviewed from galleys R 3-5 yrs

Little Bunny has hopefully stopped wearing his diapers at night, but he always seems to wake up wet, in need of a change of both sheets and pajamas. His easygoing parents tell him not to worry, with Papa offering the information that he, too, wet the bed when he was Little Bunny's age, and Mama saying she doesn't think he needs to go back into diapers: "We don't mind washing your sheets in the morning if you don't mind changing your pajamas in the middle of the night." Both assure him that when his body is ready to stay dry, it will, and when a dry night finally comes, Little Bunny rejoices: "I'm never going to wet the bed again!" "Let's take one day at a time," responds Mama, and then the family goes out for a celebratory treat. Bibliotherapy to be sure, but the lack of a story is compensated for by the cozy, reassuring tone of the text and the gentle and well-drawn line-and-watercolor pictures. There's a little too much text—kids who can't make it through the night might not make it through the book—and the structure of the book is static, but its repetitiveness may well serve as a mantra for kids, soothing them until they, too, can get it right. RS

BRANDENBURG, JIM *Sand and Fog: Adventures in Southern Africa*; written and illus. with photographs by Jim Brandenburg. Walker, 1994 [44p]
 Library ed. ISBN 0-8027-8233-7 \$17.85
 Trade ed. ISBN 0-8027-8232-9 \$16.95
 Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 4-7

Brandenburg went to Namibia on assignment from *National Geographic* to cover the war, here summarily dispatched: "After fulfilling my official obligations to provide images of war and of the racial conflicts involved, I turned, as quickly as possible, to the region itself." While the pictures of people tend to exoticize their subjects, he's got an eye for beauty, all right, capturing the abstract patterns in the fog-shrouded coastline and in the wind-etched patterns on the desert; the pictures of animals are attentive, bold and often uncannily caught, as in a stunningly graceful portrait of a silvery flamingo. The text is casual and engaging but rambling, and perhaps too much about Brandenburg himself and not enough about his ostensible subject. The book would have benefited from the same kind of strong focus the author found in the wolves of the Arctic (*To the Top of the World*, BCCB 11/93); nevertheless, his glorious pictures of animals and the desert landscape have plenty of allure. RS

BUNTING, EVE *Sunshine Home*; illus. by Diane de Groat. Clarion, 1994 [32p]
 ISBN 0-395-63309-5 \$14.95
 Reviewed from galleys R 5-7 yrs

A story that could have stayed at the level of bibliotherapy instead cuts to the heart as the narrator suffers through his family's forced-cheerful visit to Gram's nursing home, discovers his mother and grandmother separately in tears afterwards, and confronts them with the fact that everything is not all right. The ending makes no promises beyond honesty, "because maybe Gram will never be well enough to ride in a red convertible" (for which she has threatened to trade her wheelchair). Yet it's clear that an admission of sorrow will at least allow mutual comforting. It's

also clear that isolation is the real curse of old age, something a child not far removed from the throes of separation anxiety can understand with special intensity. de Groat's watercolors are well composed and colored, if heavily literal; in fact, they have a photo-realistic quality that weights the total impact without becoming somber. BH

CHANDRA, DEBORAH *Miss Mabel's Table*; illus. by Max Grover. Browndeer/Harcourt, 1994 32p
ISBN 0-15-276712-6 \$14.95 Ad 4-7 yrs

A cumulative rhyme, roughly following the pattern of "The House That Jack Built," tells of the ingredients gathering on Miss Mabel's table in preparation for the making of pancakes. Each spread has the growing rhyme on the verso, illustrated by the rapidly filling table, and on the recto Miss Mabel starting her day and commuting through the city, a conundrum resolved when she arrives at her restaurant, Miss Mabel's Table, and proceeds to make pancakes for her customers. The culinarily cumulative countdown is a cute idea, but there are some problems with the execution. It's not clear how these ingredients are getting out on the restaurant table if Mabel's not there, and there's a logical glitch when the text describes Mabel mixing the batter while the picture clearly shows her already frying up the end product (the pancakes themselves will be rather odd since the recipe parameters—ten dashes of yeast, nine spoons of sugar, eight pats of butter, seven sweet strawberries, six pinches of cinnamon, five eggs, four cups of flour, three glasses of milk, two teaspoons of salt—are hardly Betty Crocker). The pictures are sunshiny-bright with contrasting colors and a cheerily make-believe feel, although the draftsmanship sometimes wavers between naive and awkward. This is fun to chant aloud and perhaps to follow up with some treats, but be prepared to field a few questions from the audience. DS

COOPER, MELROSE *Life Riddles*. Holt, 1994 90p
ISBN 0-8050-2613-4 \$14.95 Ad Gr. 5-8

Twelve-year-old Janelle determines to become a writer just about the time her family seems to be falling apart: Daddy has lost his job and left the family; five-year-old Roxann whines while nine-year-old Crystal pesters; Mama's so strapped for cash that the phone and electricity are turned off before she, too, loses her job; Aunt Barbara can only do so much to help out. But there's lots of love and strength of character in this African-American family, and they always make it through somehow. In a way, that's the problem—there are no inner adversaries here, so the outer adversities never seem truly threatening. The adults are super strong (even Daddy comes back); Janelle's first story is accepted by a magazine for two hundred dollars, which sustains her through the next couple of rejections; and Aunt Barbara is a font of wisdom. Still, Janelle has a strong voice, the writing is fluid, and the reading is easy. Kids will find this a friendly first-person narrative, and one that shows what daily difficulties face many low-income children. BH

DALOKAY, VEDAT *Sister Shako and Koio the Goat: Memories of My Childhood in Turkey*; tr. by Güner Ener. Lothrop, 1994 [96p]
ISBN 0-688-13271-5 \$13.00
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 5-8

In a book full of sudden spurts of humor and equally unexpected measures of

sadness, Dalokay remembers an old woman whose family had been murdered in a vendetta and who set up housekeeping, with a herd of goats led by the milk-white mother-goat Kolo, in his father's abandoned stable. The brief chapters vary from intriguing episodes to descriptions punctuated with naive irony: "If Kolo's ears pointed up, Sister Shako grew very cautious. 'Either a wolf,' she said, 'or the gendarme sergeant is coming.'" There is little cohesive tension built throughout the book, but it nevertheless exerts a magnetic quality that becomes strongest as Sister Shako's death approaches. "I shall be the grass in the pasture and I shall be the milk in Kolo's udder. . . . I shall enter the blood of whoever drinks Kolo's milk, and I shall be in your flesh, in your bones, in the light of your eyes, dearest." This first-person narrative conveys vividly both the wisdom and superstition, the suffering and closeness with nature, that were common to rural Turkey in past generations, and it is with regret that readers discover how a dam destroys it all—"The great story of life and of our village disappeared in the water of the lake"—and how the author of this lyrical recollection was killed with all his family in an automobile accident before its translation and publication were completed. Even though the memoir aspect per se will not appeal to children, the voice is direct and immediate, while the relationship between an observant young boy, his beloved friend, and her individualistic animals overshadows any traces of nostalgia. The book may have particular appeal among children of Turkish background, but it will also make a successful read-aloud in any classroom. Heavy borders at the top and bottom of each page contribute to a decorative, if somewhat crowded, format. BH

DORFLINGER, CAROLYN *Tomorrow Is Mom's Birthday*; illus. by Iza Trapani. Whispering Coyote, 1994 32p
ISBN 1-879085-84-4 \$14.95 R 4-6 yrs

Tomorrow is Mom's birthday, and little Tyler doesn't know what to get for her. Last year he made cookies—but Mom's on a diet. His friend Samantha suggests wildflowers—but it's January. He'd make Mom dinner—"but her favorite meal is lobster, and I'm afraid to touch one." And so on. It's a bit catalogish, but the dilemma is real, touching, and gently funny; and the solution is sweet if anticlimactic: Tyler paints a family portrait for his mom to hang over the fireplace. Tyler's narration has just enough real-boy exasperation, and the watercolor illustrations are familial and cozy. RS

DOWDEN, ANNE OPHELIA *Poisons in Our Path: Plants That Harm and Heal*; written and illus. by Anne Ophelia Dowden. HarperCollins, 1994 [64p]
Library ed. ISBN 0-06-020862-7 \$16.89
Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-020861-9 \$17.00
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 4-6

There's something enticingly creepy about the combination of Dowden's measured prose and meticulous illustrations (all half-life-sized) with the malignity of her subject: water hemlock "grow in clumps, like dahlia roots, and they smell like parsnips. In winter, when they are swollen and succulent, people sometimes mistake them for wild parsnips. But one mouthful can kill a man." As Dowden reiterates throughout this intriguing botanical history, the line between poison and cure is a fine one, as are those between medicine, folklore, and witchcraft. Also between history and legend—it's a little disconcerting (not to mention confusing) to read in the same caption that foxglove is useful for heart ailments and

that it is also "a very special fairy flower, a hiding place for elves." But the stories are good, although it is unfortunate that no notes or information sources are provided, and the seasoning of nature study with human nature makes for a tasty brew. Indexes of plant names and subjects are appended, and the book would make a handy complement to Carol Lerner's more strictly botanical *Moonseed and Mistletoe: A Book of Poisonous Wild Plants* (BCCB 3/88) and *Dumb Cane and Daffodils: Poisonous Plants in the House and Garden* (3/90). RS

EHLERT, LOIS *Mole's Hill: A Woodland Tale*; written and illus. by Lois Ehlert. Harcourt, 1994 34p
ISBN 0-15-255116-6 \$14.95 R 4-7 yrs

"We're planning a path to the pond," says Fox to Mole, "and your hill is in our way. It must go." Mole doesn't want to leave her beloved home, so she cleverly makes the hill even bigger and plants seeds all over it. When Fox comes to enforce his deadline in the fall, the flower-covered hill is so splendid that neither he nor his henchmen Skunk and Raccoon want it to disappear; Mole is instead commissioned to tunnel a path through it, which she happily does. This is a pleasing trickster-diplomat story, where the trickee is as happy as the trickster with the results of the trick. Ehlert's language is compact and telling, with dialogue easily understandable to small fry ("Better listen to Fox—he's got big teeth") and interpersonal dynamics familiar from the playground. The art (inspired by the ribbon applique and sewn beadwork of the Woodland Indians, says a note) is dark-hued, appropriately nocturnal without losing spirit or contrast, and the beads stippled across the cutout cloth shapes lend interesting texture to the planes of color. The stylization of the images might sometimes prompt guessing games, as with a phases-of-the-moon spread, but that just adds to the sharing fun. The animal figures are loaded with personality conveyed by a tilt of the head or a flick of the tail, and the blossoming hill is a two-dimensional pastoral delight reminiscent of Remy Charlip's spreads in Margaret Wise Brown's *Four Fur Feet*. The story (which Ehlert says she based on a fragment of a Seneca tale, with source completely cited in the book) has charm and vigor, and you may want to plan a paper-garden project for followup—or maybe just tuck the little moles in. DS

FIRESIDE, BRYNA J. *Is There a Woman in the House . . . or Senate?* Whitman, 1994 144p illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-8075-3662-8 \$14.95 R Gr. 4-7

A collective biography of ten women formerly or currently in the United States Congress, this describes the lives and careers of Jeannette Rankin, Margaret Chase Smith, Shirley Chisholm, Bella Abzug, Barbara Jordan, Patricia Schroeder, Millicent Fenwick, Barbara Mikulski, Nancy Kassebaum, and Geraldine Ferraro. The descriptions are brisk and simple, relying substantially on interviews with the author and others; subjects tell of grinding labor, mistakes made, and goals reached, with determination the one characteristic common to all ten women. Although somewhat stodgy, the format is enlivened with frequent black-and-white photographs. The inclusion of some renowned characters and the feminist slant make the book appealing as well as useful. The work begins with a laudably straightforward and understandable explanation of "How Congress Works"; an index and bibliography are included. DS

GERSHATOR, PHILLIS *Rata-pata-scata-fata: A Caribbean Story*; illus. by Holly Meade. Little, 1994 32p
ISBN 0-316-30470-0 \$14.95 R 3-6 yrs

Gershator has a light and lively sense of language, along with a storytelling rhythm that shows experience with keeping young listeners involved. Unlike her adaptation of *Tukama Tootles the Flute*, a folktale reviewed below, this is an original story, though it does incorporate an old Virgin Islands nonsense phrase that the main character, dreamy little Junjun, repeats whenever he makes a wish to avoid the chores his mother assigns him. Junjun thinks his wishes are fulfilled by magic, but the audience may credit good luck: a fish Junjun wishes for actually drops in the dust from a passing fisherman's basket; the goat Junjun wishes he could find actually follows him for a taste of his straw hat; the tamarinds he's supposed to pick fall to the ground with a big whoosh of wind; and the rain he convinces his mother to wish for falls in the night, "ra-ta-pa-ta-sca-ta-fa-ta." Just as lighthearted as the story are Meade's illustrations, which outline each shape with white space that gives the compositions an airy quality; the patterns have a torn-paper collage look, and the colors are soft, all of which contributes to a happy celebration of Caribbean childhood. BH

GERSHATOR, PHILLIS, ad. *Tukama Tootles the Flute: A Tale from the Antilles*; illus. by Synthia Saint James. Jackson/Orchard, 1994 32p
Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08661-5 \$15.99
Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-06811-0 \$15.95 R* 4-7 yrs

Tukama is a rascally boy who runs away and plays on his flute instead of helping his grandmother with chores on the Caribbean island where they live. "Don't you know a two-headed giant runnin' about here, lookin' for wild children to eat?" he's warned. True to folkloric form, Tukama violates his grandmother's prohibition to visit the dangerous rocks by the sea, whereupon guess-who appears, two heads and all. Only Tukama's music distracts the giant, which commands the boy to jump on its big toe, knee, chest, and nose, singing the song each time: "Tanto, tanto, tango,/ Guavaberry, mango,/ Bombwiti, bombwiti,/ Bimbala, bango." But it's the giant's wife who lets the boy out of the bag as she requests yet more music: "Tanto, tanto, taya,/ Tamarind, papaya,/ Mama lama, cuma lama,/ Mama lama laya." This generates a mesmerizing quality reminiscent of Virginia Hamilton's rhythmic adaptation of "A Wolf and Little Daughter" in *The People Could Fly* (BCCB 7/85). In fact, pairing the two for a story hour will ensure breathless listeners, but don't cheat on showing the oil paintings, which use large, plain shapes in red, black, green, and brown for a monumental effect. A note names the source and describes the author's variations on it, with a bit of cultural background as well. BH

GOLDIN, BARBARA DIAMOND *The Passover Journey: A Seder Companion*; illus. by Neil Waldman. Viking, 1994 56p
ISBN 0-670-82421-6 \$15.99 R Gr. 3-6

Including stories from Midrash as well as Torah, Goldin begins by recounting the Israelites' slavery in Egypt and escape under the leadership of Moses. The second part of the book describes rituals of Passover, with the fourteen steps of Seder explained in relation to their symbolic representation of history. A brief section on the Warsaw Ghetto uprising at Passover seems isolated; the example could have

been either expanded to include others or placed at the end of the first section, but overall the organization is clean. Key words are given in Hebrew and English transliteration, while a glossary helps with translation of any words not thoroughly clarified in the text. Goldin's style is straightforward and her source note commendable. The book will be useful with a wide age range because it can be either read aloud with younger children or read alone by older ones. The smoothly stylized illustrations, which have an airbrushed effect, will appeal to both groups. More thorough than many children's books on *Pesach*, this takes great care to explore Jewish tradition and to encourage individual response to it. BH

GOODSMITH, LAUREN *The Children of Mauritania: Days in the Desert and by the River Shore*; written and illus. with photographs by Lauren Goodsmith. Carolrhoda, 1994 56p
ISBN 0-87614-782-1 \$14.96 (The World's Children)

HERMES, JULES *The Children of India*; written and illus. with photographs by Jules Hermes. Carolrhoda, 1994 48p (The World's Children)
ISBN 0-87614-759-7 \$14.96 Ad Gr. 3-6

Lavishly illustrated photo-essays of various exotic areas of the world are definitely flavor-of-the-month in children's publishing these days. They generally focus upon one child or a single family, taking the child (and the reader) through some cultural customs or rites, and usually find room for dramatic shots of the local landscape as well. The trick is keeping a keen, honest focus, distilling the chosen culture without betraying its complexities, and maintaining a proper balance of the anecdotal and informative that respects both subject and reader. These two entries in the publisher's World's Children series appealingly center upon child-life, have plenty of attractive color photos, and give a sense of cultural particulars, but each tries to cover too much. *The Children of India* features about twenty children and cultures, admirably acknowledging the diversity of such a huge country, but it seems as if we've just met one when we're off to another, sometimes in the space of a single page. *Mauritania* focuses on two children only, one from the Arabic north of the country and the other from the West African south, but their stories go back and forth confusingly, with neither text nor design giving us warning of the frequent shifts in perspective. As Russ Kendall (*Russian Girl*, BCCB 1/94) and Barbara Margolies (*Olbalbal*, 3/93) have learned, the world's a big place, but slow down, take it easy, concentrate on one place at a time. *India's* appended material includes a glossary and index; *Mauritania* has a pronunciation guide and an index. RS

GREENE, ELLIN, ad. *Billy Beg and His Bull*; illus. by Kimberly Bulcken Root. Holiday House, 1994 32p
ISBN 0-8234-1100-1 \$15.95 R 5-8 yrs

A hero tale with a gender-switched Cinderella motif, this follows the fortunes of young Billy, the only son of an Irish king, and the beloved bull given him as a child by his mother. After fleeing from the wiles of an evil stepmother, Billy and the bull have parallel adventures: the bull fights three other bulls and is killed by the last, but not before endowing Billy with magical powers; Billy fights three many-headed giants, overcomes them all, frees a princess from a dragon, rides away as the princess seizes his shoe, and is found by the fit later on. Greene has done a skillful job of adapting this Seumas MacManus story, honoring the traditional rhythms of

language without belaboring them and selecting for sharp focus without oversimplifying the story. Root's paintings, too, revel in deep green drama without indulging in the visual clichés that are sometimes derived from folk art motifs; rather, she maintains a sly sense of humor in both style and content while at the same time dignifying the larger-than-life figures with hardy action. This makes a robust addition to any folktale collection, the kind of picture book that will outlast St. Patrick's Day by 364 days. BH

GREENFELD, HOWARD *Paul Gauguin.*

See Berman, p. 252, for review.

HAAS, JESSIE *Uncle Daney's Way.* Greenwillow, 1994 [128p]

ISBN 0-688-12794-0 \$14.00

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 4-7

Twelve-year-old Cole is at first uneasy about his uncle's moving in with the family, but Uncle Daney, an ex-logger who uses a wheelchair after an accident, turns out to be an exciting and helpful companion. Daney brings his big logging horse, Nip, of whom Cole grows fond and who proves useful at tasks around the farm. Uncle Daney is determined to keep his horse, so he and Cole decide to enter Nip in the Single-Horse Log Skid and win enough money to pay for Nip's feed. Okay, so it's not a surprise that Nip, guided by Cole rather than Daney, has a victory of sorts, coming second in the contest and garnering local attention for Daney's superb training, but Haas' smooth and lively prose makes the Disneyesque tale seem classic rather than hackneyed. Details such as Cole's outsider status at school, Daney's happy-go-lucky character, and Nip's taste for hard-boiled eggs fill the story out, as does the backgrounded depiction of a hard-working family trying to do its best under difficult circumstances. This could be either a horse book that happens to have a boy or a boy book that happens to have a horse, depending on reader interest; for whomever, it's a good old story told with affection and subtlety. DS

HAHN, MARY DOWNING *Time for Andrew.* Clarion, 1994 [160p]

ISBN 0-395-66556-6 \$13.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-8

While Hahn's latest is subtitled "A Ghost Story," it's actually a timeshift tale, but very spooky nonetheless. Staying, under protest, with his great-aunt Blythe and her father in their old Missouri house while his parents work in France for the summer, Drew, twelve, finds himself switched in time with his namesake Andrew, who lived more than eighty years before. Unlike the timid Drew, Andrew is tough and troublesome, but he's afraid to go back to his own time where, according to Andrew who heard it from Aunt Blythe, he died while still a boy. The two boys (who can meet in the attic of the house) strike a bargain that they will return to their own times as soon as Drew can beat Andrew at a game of marbles, a skill at which Andrew excels while Drew is hopeless. Although the time-travel matrix is not as rigorously worked out as it could have been, the to-ing and fro-ing is easy to follow and suspenseful, as each boy finds himself becoming the other and forgetting his own self. Together they manage to change family history as well as themselves, the best qualities of one rubbing off onto the other and leading to a greatly

satisfying meeting in the present for a neat conclusion. Assured work from a deservedly popular writer, who, while gifted with the instincts of a storyteller, doesn't let her narrative get away from her characters. RS

HAUSMAN, GERALD *Turtle Island ABC: A Gathering of Native American Symbols*; illus. by Cara and Barry Moser. HarperCollins, 1994 [32p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-06-021308-6 \$14.89

Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-021307-8 \$15.00

Reviewed from galleys

M 6-9 yrs

This an alphabetically arranged gathering of "symbols" taken from "The People," and a more pretentious ABC has not been published for awhile. *A* is for Arrow, *B*, Buffalo . . . *G*, Great Serpent . . . *M*, Mother Earth . . . *Z*, Zigzag, "the arrow of the sky." Each letter is captioned with a paragraph written with the hushed reverence that surrounds so much children's-book neo-Indianism (Round: "Round, the dance The People do; round, the lodge they live in. Round is the world and the word *round*. I am Round, the shape of all good things") and the book seems blithely unaware of the differences between symbol, object, and concept. Likewise, it slaps together beliefs from different tribes and parts of the country, forgetting, for example, that Pueblos (for *P*) are not Round ("round, the lodge they live in") nor would pueblos be familiar to "The People" living outside the Southwest. Moser and Moser's pastel crayon illustrations of the symbols are mistily attractive, if dim, pictures that recall Ed Young's work; although an introduction indulges in much historical anachronism, there isn't a hint of a source note for any of the information in the book. It looks like a good storyhour starter or teaching tool, but it's actually more deceptive than useful. RS

HAYNES, BETSY *Deadly Deception*. Delacorte, 1994 [224p]

ISBN 0-385-32067-1 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

M Gr. 7-10

Seventeen-year-old Ashlyn Brennan lives a rich and privileged Florida existence, but that doesn't keep her from heartache when her life turns upside-down. First Drew, her loving but tormented boyfriend, shows signs that his drug problem is returning, and then her boss, the school counselor, is found murdered. Drew is suspected, but Ashlyn, who believes in him, sleuths around until she discovers that the school counselor was in fact her own biological mother, from whom Ashlyn's "mom" had kidnapped her as an infant; the evil Mrs. Brennan has killed the counselor to avoid exposure. It's an outlandish plot, but it could have made a decent B-movie adventure. Here, unfortunately, the characterizations are shallow and oversimplified and the unlikely is made ludicrous by flat writing: "I should never have let my business keep me away from home so much," says Ashlyn's father sadly upon discovering all this melodrama. Worst of all, the plot is mushy, with some apparently important points tossed away (the murder weapon assumes great importance but then proves to have been discarded early on, as any armchair detective would have assumed), other points left unexplained (where did Mrs. Brennan get the drugs she uses to try to poison Ashlyn at the end?), and a few points simply confusing, such as the set-up chapter which describes Drew's problem with an awkward and overdramatic image of dual personality. This isn't a difficult read and the lurid subject matter has its pleasures, but it doesn't provide a potentially valuable bridge between Christopher Pike and Joan Lowery Nixon, both of whom do their respective thriller turns much better. DS

HERMES, JULES *The Children of India*

See Goodsmith, p. 258, for review.

HOBERMAN, MARY ANN, comp. *My Song Is Beautiful: Poems and Pictures in Many Voices*. Little, 1994 32p illus.

ISBN 0-316-36738-9 \$15.95

R 5-8 yrs

Hoberman has gathered fourteen poems celebrating personal as well as ethnic diversity, with fourteen artists depicting African-American, Asian-American, Native American, Latino, and white characters in cultural context. "I'm gonna beat/ out my own rhythm," says Nikki Giovanni's narrator, portrayed by David Diaz as a black drummer beating on the globe; "I too when my time comes/ Shall do mightily," concludes a Chippewa song illustrated by Bernie Fuchs. There's plenty of tonal variety for reading aloud: James Houston's "Ayii, Ayii, Ayii: A Central Eskimo Chant," with its clean black-and-white graphics by Dale DeArmond, invokes physical movement and loud voices; Kim Soo-Jang's "In a Hermit's Cottage" is as silent and still as Yoriko Ito's accompanying watercolor painting. Devoting a double spread to each poem and picture not only avoids awkward juxtapositions of style but also allows room for verbal and visual images to reverberate. It's a luxury that allows simple poems the space to expand, and precocious independent readers as well as young listeners will dwell on each selection. BH

HUTTON, WARWICK, ad. *Persephone*; ad. and illus. by Warwick Hutton. McElderry, 1994 32p

ISBN 0-689-50600-7 \$14.95

R 5-8 yrs

Hades' abduction of Persephone and her mother Demeter's subsequent search, which caused all growing things to shrivel in the world, makes a strong mythical context for artist Hutton's perpetual play with light and dark. Vivid tonal contrasts demarcate the gloom of an underworld lit by a few streaks of sunlight, the yellow glare of barren ground where Demeter wanders, the cool blue-greens of the river that tells where Persephone has been taken, and the cycles of seasonal color that accompany Persephone's return to her mother in springtime and to Hades in winter. Even the pomegranate seeds themselves, whose rosy hue highlights the headband on an expressive heroine and permeates the endpapers of the book, becomes an intense graphic motif. Like Hutton's other interpretations (*Perseus*, *Theseus and the Minotaur*, *The Trojan Horse*), this compressed adaptation gains power from its restrained visualization. BH

IRWIN, HADLEY *Jim-Dandy*. McElderry, 1994 [144p]

ISBN 0-689-50594-9 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-7

Caleb and his stepfather are homesteaders in post-Civil-War Kansas, and Caleb finds no joy in the empty prairie that surrounds him, in the constant hard labor required to keep the farm going, or in his dour stepfather, even more stern since the death of Caleb's mother. When the colt Dandy is born, Caleb lavishes all his affection on him, secretly gentling him and breaking him to ride. Caleb's stepfather, however, is forced to sell Dandy to the army, and Caleb follows his horse, becoming a stableboy for Custer's Seventh Cavalry and traveling with them as they embark on their Indian-extermimating mission. Dandy and Caleb provide a good

focus for this historical drama, which brings to life a hard chapter of American history; the book wisely stops before Little Big Horn, which would have overshadowed the daily-life impact of the story. The two halves of the plot (homestead and army) hinge together relatively well, especially since Caleb's moral questioning of the military sends him back to his Quaker stepfather. The book is a little too well-meaning, but it's a compelling story with appealing characters, and kids who ordinarily resist historical fiction may find the horsey subject appealing. A note attests to the existence of the real Dandy, who traveled with Custer and who survived Little Big Horn to live to the ripe old age of twenty-eight. DS

KILLINGSWORTH, MONTE *Circle Within a Circle*. McElderry, 1994 [176p]
ISBN 0-689-50598-1 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 6-9

Chris, a young teen whose parents died in a double tragedy, has been shunted from foster home to foster home, abused and misunderstood. He finally can stand it no more and runs away to be picked up on the freeway by a highly educated Native American scientist whose passion is souping up his Volkswagen bus with a Porsche engine. The scientist, a Vietnam veteran nicknamed Chopper, has been called home (the Northwest) to help his people keep conglomerate developers and the local establishment from building an exclusive golf resort on sacred Indian land. Realizing that the town meeting at which he chastises the public for their greed and environmental insensitivity won't stop the project, Chopper and Chris take matters into their own hands, infuriating the developers. After a chase scene, the book ends with the two main characters deciding to stick together. It's a loaded situation, and the good guys/bad guys scenario is oversimplified, with the tone sometimes tipping from serious to self-righteous. On the other hand, the writing is vivid and the plotting smooth. This is a book that could well attract rebellious teens drawn to automotive action and will make ideal preparation for best-selling adult fiction—or good copy for a made-for-TV movie. CF

KIMMEL, ERIC A., ad. *The Three Princes: A Tale from the Middle East*; illus. by Leonard Everett Fisher. Holiday House, 1994 32p
ISBN 0-8234-1115-X \$15.95

R 5-8 yrs

A variant of "The Rarest Gift" tale type (653A), this describes three men's search for a present that will win them marriage with a beautiful princess. One finds a crystal ball, the next a flying carpet, and the last an orange that will cure any illness. The crystal ball reveals that the far-away princess lies dying, the carpet takes them all home, and the orange cures her. Since each man has contributed to saving her, which deserves her hand? The answer here is the third (sometimes it's a fourth man entirely), since the first two have something left while the gift of the third is gone. This princess has had her eye on the third for some time, anyway, since he's young, handsome, and poor—and she's able to flex both her will and her wisdom more than most Middle Eastern heroines (in other versions, her father is seeking a suitor for her). Kimmel cites several Saudi Arabian students and *The Arabian Nights* as the source for this, and Fisher's thick acrylics make the most of luxuriously draped Arab robes and *kaffiyehs*, with dramatic backgrounds of bare desert landscape or nighttime skies. There's an element of caricature to these figures, especially the wazir and the princess, who is veiled early on but later appears unveiled before all her courtiers. Still, we have precious few picture book folktales

from the Islamic world, and this one will make good group showing and telling. The story first appeared in *Cricket Magazine*. BH

KLASS, DAVID *California Blue*. Scholastic, 1994 199p
ISBN 0-590-46688-7 \$13.95

R Gr. 6-9

John Rodgers is a high-school junior in a California logging town, where cafés advertise "Spotted Owl Omelet" in the window and he was once beaten up for receiving a naturalist's magazine in the mail. Not surprisingly, when John discovers a never-before-seen butterfly in the logging-company forest and environmentalists seek to halt logging in order to preserve its habitat, all hell breaks loose. Klass doesn't stack the deck by making his subject species cute and furry, and he's more perceptive about this battle than most writers on the subject; while his hand is tipped in favor of the environmentalists, there's good and bad on both sides. The subplots—John's struggle to understand his domineering and now critically ill father, and his crush on his biology teacher—blend well into the main plot, making the book about manhood and the price of inclusion as well as ecology. John's narration is compelling (although he tends to philosophize too much and resorts to capital letters for emphasis too often), and his divided loyalties are well-depicted: "I had the terribly uncomfortable feeling of being an enemy among people who treated me like a friend." The topicality of subject and appeal of the themes make this a good choice for a variety of readers, including Chris Crutcher fans who are ready for something a little more restrained. DS

KLEIN, ROBIN *Seeing Things*. Viking, 1994 189p
ISBN 0-670-85282-1 \$12.50

R Gr. 5-8

Miranda begins "seeing things" when, bored during a lecture on Captain Cook, she visualizes an ancient, angry face in the ripples on the classroom ceiling. Later, when watching *Good Queen Bess* on TV with her grandmother and tiresome Uncle Bernie, Miranda sees the picture fade to a vision of the real Elizabeth I, and she realizes that she is psychic: "I think I can see into the past." Bernie senses a goldmine in Miranda's newly discovered powers, and while she successfully performs for a psychic society, her powers fail her the one time she really needs them, when the criminal father of her sister's baby kidnaps Miranda and demands she "see" where one of his nefarious companions has run off to. Despite some heavy-handed psychologizing about Miranda's refusal to accept her parents' death in an accident some years before, the story is suspenseful, and Miranda is a cranky, compelling narrator. The revelation near the end that Miranda's been making it all up is skillfully done, and readers, feeling just as gulled as the family, will scurry back through the book to see what they missed. It's all there, and it's a tribute to Klein's powers of storytelling that we didn't see it in the first place. RS

KRENSKY, STEPHEN *The Iron Dragon Never Sleeps*; illus. by John Fulweiler. Delacorte, 1994 [80p]
ISBN 0-385-31171-0 \$13.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 3-6

Ten-year-old Winnie Tucker begins the summer of 1867 with a train ride from Sacramento to the small town where her father works as a mining engineer for Central Pacific; she ends the summer knowing a lot about the railroad and those who build it, primarily Chinese workers as represented by her newfound friend

Lee Cheng. Chapter One concludes with Winnie's thought that "Chinese workers must be very brave," and subsequent episodes reveal them to be clean, hard-working, sensitive, scorned by people who take no trouble to understand their traditions, and victimized by villainous company strike-breakers. It's a purposive novel, with scenes and characters set up to show unfair employment practices and racist discrimination against immigrant laborers. On the other hand, Winnie and Lee Cheng's relationship does take on a kind of fragile reality, albeit one informed by current multicultural ideals. The book is easy to read for discussion among younger students than those who could handle the only other recent novel about this subject, Laurence Yep's *Dragon's Gate* (BCCB 12/93). An afterword distinguishes between fictional elements and historical facts. Reviewed from an unillustrated galley. BH

LASKY, KATHRYN *Memoirs of a Bookbat*. Harcourt, 1994 [192p]
ISBN 0-15-215727-1 \$10.95

Reviewed from galleys

M Gr. 6-9

Harper is at first relieved when her troubled parents find religion, but when their new fundamentalist faith causes them to cast a doubtful eye on Harper's reading preferences, which range from William Steig and Judy Blume to the fictional Rosemary Nearing and Dolores Macuccho, she begins to feel threatened. All four writers—and many more—are suspect in her parents' newly opened eyes, and now, since her family has taken to traveling the country and trumpeting the cause, books, the only constant in her life, are more important than ever to Harper: "Every new classroom was different, but I could always count on the library to be familiar." The protagonist's development through books is an appealing idea, and her alienation from the family will focus readers' sympathy. Unfortunately the parents, who offer rich potential for depth at the book's beginning, are flattened as their oversimplified ideology (fundamentalist Christianity gets conflated here with racist villainy) takes over, moving inner conflicts to a superficial level; Harper's choices become only too obvious as her parents and their cohorts become stereotyped. Stephanie Tolan paints a more fair and sympathetic picture of fundamentalism in *Save Halloween!* (BCCB 10/93), and if it's skewering of the censors you want, Konigsburg's *T-Backs*, *T-Shirts*, *COAT and Suit* (11/93) is more on target and recognizes the fact that if you're going to pick on some of your characters, you've got to pick on them all. The plot here is overprogrammed with contrivances (for instance, after Harper's friend Gray helps her run away from California to her grandmother's house in Georgia, he wins a scholarship to a Huntsville, Alabama, Space Camp and both kids are invited for a weekend with their favorite author in Mississippi) and is editorially-driven to make a point (as when Harper's little sister, brainwashed by another little girl, co-writes a hate letter to "JEWdy" Blume). Lasky's writing smooths over some of the storytelling missteps, but the real tensions and ambiguities of a cast caught up in a cause ultimately get lost as the characters are manipulated by the message. RS

LEWIS-FERGUSON, JULINDA *Alvin Ailey, Jr.: A Life in Dance*. Walker, 1994 [96p] illus. with photographs

Library ed. ISBN 0-8027-8241-8 \$13.85

Trade ed. ISBN 0-8027-8239-6 \$12.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 5-7

For older readers than Pinkney's *Alvin Ailey* (BCCB 11/93), this volume by dance

critic Julinda Lewis-Ferguson goes into more detail about Ailey's professional career. The author traces Ailey's involvement with the dance from his work with Lester Horton to the formation of his own ballet company with its attendant trials and triumphs. Although diligently compiled, the material is sometimes confusingly organized, with the account of Ailey's stage career popping up in chronologically inappropriate places and the contemporary description of the American Dance Center appearing before the chapter on Ailey's death; it's also a shame that there aren't more photographs of Ailey's dances in performance. There's substantial information on an important figure here, though, and quotes from Ailey and associates appear throughout the text (said Judith Jamison wryly about Ailey's famous dance *Cry*: "I didn't know how difficult the dance was until opening night . . . because we never got the chance to run it from beginning to end until the curtain was up"). An unusual section entitled "A Sampler of Ailey Dances" devotes a page or two each to description of his major works; there are no notes, but a bibliography of books, selected articles, and selected dance reviews is included. DS

LIPTAK, KAREN *Adoption Controversies*. Watts, 1993 158p (The Changing Family)

ISBN 0-531-13032-0 \$13.50

R Gr. 7-12

There is really no uncontroversial area of adoption, and Liptak, recognizing that, has responded with one of the most competent surveys of the subject to appear in recent years. Her chapter topics include "Today's Options for Unwed Pregnant Teenagers," "Open versus Closed Adoptions," "Agency versus Independent Adoptions," "Transracial Adoptions," "Searches," "Surrogate Motherhood," and many others. Her stated aim, successfully achieved, is to create a book not only useful as a research tool but also helpful to any reader grappling with his or her part in the "adoption triad" of biological parent, adoptive parent, and adoptive child. The author makes clear that each state regulates adoption differently and that she has based most of her specific legal discussion on her home state of Arizona. She treats attitudes towards the various controversies evenhandedly and has managed to be current (discussing recent decisions about rights of birth fathers and Native American tribes, for instance) without being sensational. The book's main flaw is that although most of the extensive research is documented, much of it is not: at least one book mentioned in the text (and under an incorrect title) does not appear in the bibliographies, and what appear to be interviews with people are neither attributed nor cited. The book does include endnotes, a list of organizations, a glossary, a bibliography, a list of books for further reading, and an index; it is a well-written and helpful book on a subject that needs one. DS

LIVELY, PENELOPE *The Cat, the Crow, and the Banyan Tree*; illus. by Terry Milne. Candlewick, 1994 [26p]

ISBN 1-56402-325-7 \$14.95

Reviewed from galleys

R 5-8 yrs

In many of her novels, Penelope Lively has played with concepts of time and place; now she one-ups both by deconstructing a story as it unfolds. Well, two stories, actually: "The cat and the crow lived under the banyan tree. All day long they told stories. The cat was thin and quick, and she told stories that were elegant and entertaining. The crow was fat and handsome, and he told stories that were fast and furious. The banyan tree was tall and wide and light and dark and full of

secrets." That quickly, the setting, action, and characters are laid out. What comes next is an elegant and entertaining story followed by a fast and furious story ("I don't like this story," wailed the cat. "I want to get off"), each consistent with its teller, and both concluded by a tea party for the whole cast. Did I mention that both characters walk, run, and fly through each story? It's complicated, but not so much that kids won't eventually absorb the play of action and narrative. Terry Milne's pen-and-ink wash illustrations help, because they're inventive without getting surrealistic and they give a light, nonsensical touch to the whole operation. Neither art nor text become self-conscious, but there's an air of Edward Lear here, and even Alice in Wonderland. BH

McNAUGHTON, COLIN *Making Friends with Frankenstein: A Book of Monstrous Poems and Pictures*; written and illus. by Colin McNaughton. Candlewick, 1994 [90p]
ISBN 1-56402-308-7 \$19.95 R* Gr. 3-6

See this month's Big Picture, p. 247, for review.

MENNEN, INGRID *One Round Moon and a Star for Me*; illus. by Niki Daly. Kroupa/Orchard, 1994 32p
Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08654-2 \$14.99
Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-06804-8 \$14.95 R 3-6 yrs

It's not exactly a story, but the situation is universal as a young southern African boy must suddenly share his parents with a brand-new baby, which arrives shortly after Mama sees a falling star—"a star for a new baby." Watching the baby take everyone's attention, the narrator seeks reassurance and finds it: "Tonight," says Papa, "when the moon is big and round and the stars light up God's great sky, I'll show you, there is also a star for you." The watercolor paintings tell all. Warm browns dominate the affectionate portraits of a rural family and their neighbors. The setting is Lesotho, which offers sweeping, sun-glazed or midnight-blue landscapes, both of which contrast richly with cozy, rounded figures who enfold a child in cradling arms. Visual and textual details of Lesotho tradition, along with rhythmic patterns of writing and art, will make the book especially attractive to African-American parents and to preschools emphasizing readalouds with multicultural themes. BH

MILLER, MARGARET *My Five Senses*; written and illus. with photographs by Margaret Miller. Simon, 1994 [24p]
ISBN 0-671-79168-0 \$15.00
Reviewed from galleys R 2-5 yrs

Couldn't be simpler—"With my eyes I see myself (girl looking in a mirror), my shadow (girl standing in the sun), my dog (a benign face-off), and my city (skyline as viewed from a park). Similar sequences inform smell, taste, hearing, and touch, each experience illustrated by a large color photograph that conveys not only the example, but the emotion it provokes, the difference between smelling flowers and garbage, for example. As in her previous concept books, Miller doesn't try and get too fancy: the experiences pictured here are those available to most young children (although smelling a horse might be wishful thinking); follow the book up with a sensory cruise around the house. RS

MINTERS, FRANCES *Cinder-Elly*; illus. by G. Brian Karas. Viking, 1994 [32p]
ISBN 0-670-84417-9 \$13.99

Reviewed from galleys

Ad 5-8 yrs

If your charges are in the mood for a finger-snapping spoof and you have a soft spot for rhymed couplets, you can count on this New York City Cinder-Elly. Her mean sisters have gone to the basketball game and left her behind, when Godmother—looking vaguely like a winged bag lady—comes wandering by and reclothes Cinder-Elly for the game. “Thank you, dear Godma, I’m glad that you came./ But how am I going/ To get to the game?” The answer is a garbage can turned into a bike and the rest of the story follows suit. It’s a longish, jingly-jangly text, with a syllable too many now and again, but the paintings are energetic, jazzy, and funny, with a Lane Smith twist to some of them and a bit of intertextual dialogue (“Don’t fret, Elly. Things will get better soon”) in the decorated panel beside each three-quarter-spread illustration. What the verses lack in ingenuity, the pictures and format make up for with inventive flair. BH

NAMIOKA, LENSEY *April and the Dragon Lady*. Browndeer/Harcourt, 1994 [224p]

Trade ed. ISBN 0-15-276644-8 \$10.95

Paper ed. ISBN 0-15-200886-1 \$3.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 7-9

April, a Chinese-American high school senior, is happy in school, excited about a new beau, and looking forward to going off to college. The problem is Grandma, who dominates the Chen family with her demands and need for attention, and, increasingly, protection, as Grandma has become increasingly eccentric and has taken to wandering off. It’s on April that most of the responsibility falls; since her mother’s death two years ago, she’s had to take on the role of the dutiful daughter while her older brother goes his merry way, and her father helplessly goes along with Grandma’s regime. It’s a compelling tangle of relationships, but the writing takes a summary, even desultory tone that makes the problem seem less serious than it’s apparently meant to be. April’s romance with a white boy seems more friendly than passionate, and their conversations are stiff: “It came as a shock to discover that some of my values were not the same as Steve’s. ‘I must have absorbed my Chinese attitudes without realizing it,’ I said in a low voice. ‘Maybe it’s because of having Grandma live with us.’” Grandma herself is the only real live wire in the group (when she cleans out the residents of a nursing home in a mah-jongg game, for example) but not all of her tricks ring true (such as pretending she’s a homeless person in order to embarrass the family into taking better care of her). Unconvincing but undemanding, smoothly if slightly written, the book presents family drama in a light way, and the resolution is contrived but satisfying for all concerned. RS

NOLAN, HAN *If I Should Die Before I Wake*. Harcourt, 1994 [288p]

ISBN 0-15-238040-X \$16.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 9-12

While she narrates the story, neo-Nazi Hilary is apparently comatose after a motorcycle accident “in some Hebe town” lands her in the “freakin’ Jew hospital” within which she has the disconcerting experience of being blown back in time to

the Holocaust, where she inhabits the body of a girl named Chana. (In an alternate gloss, Hilary could be reading the mind of Chana, now grown and in the same hospital as a patient.) As in Jane Yolen's *The Devil's Arithmetic* (BCCB 10/88) for younger readers, the time-travel device is distracting, and Nolan's picture of neo-Nazi culture ("Heil Hitler, babe. See you in Hell") is simplistically drawn. Like Yolen, she's at her best when conveying the hopelessness and random terror of the death camps, and despite the presence of a saintly grandmother, she's not afraid to portray the shameful—yet understandable—betrayal of Jews by other Jews: "I knew it would do me no good to try to plead with this woman. To her, I was Jewish scum and she was Jewish royalty." The writing is sometimes overwrought ("I dropped the shovel and fell into the dirt pile screaming, knowing somehow that from that day forward, I would be screaming forever") and there's a fair amount of speech-making that gets repetitious, but on the whole, Nolan deals honestly with her material, and her graphic descriptions of camp life have a morbid interest that teeters on exploitation but comes down on the side of the truth. RS

OPPENHEIM, SHULAMITH LEVEY, ad. *Iblis*; illus. by Ed Young. Harcourt, 1994 32p
ISBN 0-15-238016-7 \$15.95 R Gr. K-4

Drawn from the work of a ninth-century Islamic scholar whom Oppenheim cites in her opening author's note, this has much in common with the tale of the first temptation as related in both the Bible and the Koran. The Satanic figure Iblis beseeches first the peacock and then the serpent to smuggle him past the angel Ridwan into Paradise, his bribe being a promise of everlasting youth and beauty. Once inside, he lures Eve to eat a grain of the forbidden wheat tree, from which she then persuades Adam to eat, and both are expelled from Paradise. Ed Young's pastels create a soft texture, but the colors are ominously dark (maybe too dark for use with a group), and the creatures he depicts are eerie, especially the menacing Iblis as it hides in the nick between the serpent's teeth—the source of snakes' poison from that day forth. (This is one of several *pourquoi* motifs here: the serpent coils to protect itself from God's wrath, for instance, and loses her legs; the peacock loses his melodious voice.) The deep hues also serve to draw viewers in, along with Iblis, for a close look at the depths of Paradise, while the suddenly contrasted red and fiery orange thrust us away, just as Adam and Eve are thrust away. Altogether, the book has a haunting quality that touches the imagination and will stimulate comparison with more familiar variants. BH

RAY, KAREN *To Cross a Line*. Jackson/Orchard, 1994 [160p]
Library ISBN 0-531-08681-X \$15.99
Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-06831-5 \$15.95
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 7-10

"Egon kissed the chocolate-covered cookie and slipped it into his shirt pocket, where it wouldn't get crushed." This simple gift to his girlfriend makes an unassuming start to a Holocaust story, but the Jewish protagonist's journey is more than a flight out of 1938 Nazi Germany; it's also a passage from childhood into maturity, as Egon gets into and out of increasingly dangerous situations. Based on experiences of the author's father-in-law, whose mother and two sisters were killed in death camps during the war, the novel has been carefully paced for suspense. Action rules characterization here, and Egon's motor-bike accident while deliver-

ing baked goods, his trial, escape from arrest, hiding with cousins, aborted attempt to leave for Holland, and narrow escape across the Danish border (and eventually, we learn in an afterword, to Shanghai and the U.S.) are dramatically fictionalized. Language and event occasionally slip out of place: the description of a street as being "off the main drag" seems a jarring bit of American slang, for instance; a Danish guard describing his superior officer (who will decide Egon's fate) as "a fair man" has also just told of being ordered—presumably by the same fair man—to force a Jewish refugee family back across the border into Germany, where they were beaten with rifle butts. However, these are exceptions; on the whole, Ray's book features smooth writing and convincing details that turn Egon's trip into a race through some terrifying history. BH

RINALDI, ANN *A Stitch in Time*. Scholastic, 1994 [305p] (The Quilt Trilogy)

ISBN 0-590-46055-2 \$13.95

Reviewed from galleys

M Gr. 7-12

It's Salem in 1788, and Hannah is the mainstay of the stormy Chelmsford family: her mother is dead, her father brutal; her one sister planning an elopement with a Southerner, her other sister willfully wicked; her younger brother hated by her father and her other brother preparing to leave for the West. The plot thickens—boy, does it thicken—when a concern headed by her father brings low-paying textile mills to town, Hannah's old flame returns from the West with a half-Indian baby, which she cares for, Hannah falls in love with a young man suspected of running a slave ship, she discovers the dark secret about her mother, her good sister seems to be lost at sea, and her father and bad sister go west, where her sister is kidnapped by Shawnee. And she works on a quilt. Even as a lengthy but undemanding historical sudser this has problems: the multitude of events makes the saga more sprawling than sweeping, the romances don't spark, and the villain isn't convincing. Rinaldi's historical research, documented in an author's note and bibliography, goes for naught when contemporary sentiments and phrases break the mood ("Lack of trust ruined my parents' marriage"; "The man is slime"). In *A Break with Charity* (BCCB 9/92), about the Salem witch trials, Rinaldi focused with great success on an emotion-charged historical situation, making the incredible truth credible; here the events aren't really involving because there's little emotional underpinning to the story. Readers who simply like historical settings may enjoy the early-American details. Two more books about the fate of the Chelmsford family's quilt over the generations are planned. DS

RIPSLINGER, JON *Triangle*. Harcourt, 1994 [224p]

Trade ed. ISBN 0-15-200048-8 \$10.95

Paper ed. ISBN 0-15-200049-6 \$3.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 9-12

Darin, Joy, and Jeremy have been friends for almost ten years; following an accident, Darin, nominally Joy's boyfriend, has been paralyzed for nearly two years, and for the last several months, Joy and Jeremy, unbeknownst to Darin, have been having an affair. Jeremy narrates the story of the summer after graduation, as Joy pitches her heart out in summer softball, hoping for a college scholarship. The already tense situation escalates when Jeremy gets Joy pregnant, and decisions about the future must be made. The writing is smooth and the situation provocative, but the plot is too heavily melodramatic, with a mystery of Jeremy's parentage and

a supposedly dark but actually anticlimactic secret between Joy and Darin as well. And while the characterization of Joy and Jeremy is careful and credible (and it's nice to see a serious athlete in a gritty sport as a romantic heroine), Darin's bitterness is somewhat clichéd. It's still an involving, emotional read, full of serious softball action and high drama. DS

ROWAN, N. R. *Women in the Marines: The Boot Camp Challenge*; written and illus. with photographs by N. R. Rowan. Lerner, 1994 72p
ISBN 0-8225-1430-3 \$17.21 R Gr. 5-8

"You will, upon my order, disembark my bus! . . . You will speak only when spoken to! There are no private 'I's!" shouts the drill instructor to the new female recruits as they begin thirteen weeks of Marine boot camp. The author visited the Recruit Depot at Parris Island, South Carolina, talking to and photographing the young women, ages eighteen to twenty-four, who hope to be among the 75% who meet the challenge of basic training and become Marines. Rowan examines not only the strict discipline and grueling physical regime, but also the determination and strength of the recruits as they push themselves to the best of their abilities ("This recruit would like to say that everything here builds your self-confidence and your ability," says one Marine novice). The text is crisp, clear, and positive without sugarcoating the experience, telling about camp life and giving general information on women in the U.S. military. The black-and-white photographs are atmospheric, with images ranging from a young woman staring up—possibly in shock—at her new drill instructor, through camouflage-clad platoons on the weapons range, to a happy graduate and her family. Usefully informative, this will also evoke some gender pride in young female readers. An index is included. DS

SIMON, SEYMOUR *Mountains*. Morrow, 1994 [32p] illus. with photographs
ISBN 0-688-11040-1 \$15.00
Reviewed from galleys R Gr. 4-7

Arrestingly designed endpapers showing comparative heights of the world's mountains enclose this fairly simple survey of mountains: where and what they are ("to call something a mountain seems to depend upon who is looking at it and how high its surroundings are"), how they were created, and what effects they have on the local climate and ecology. All this, of course, is illustrated with Simon's typically dramatic selection of full-color, full-page photographs, along with instructive charts (although it's unfortunate that a map of tectonic plates is incompletely referenced and only shows half the planet). The distinctions among various kinds of mountains (folded, fault-block, volcanic, and domed) are clearly explained, diagrammed, and pictured, and Simon's long-view is expressive: "As soon as mountains rise, they begin to be worn down. . . ." There's no documentary material, but the book is short, and as recommendable for a story hour accompaniment as it is for basic information. RS

SMITH, DORIS BUCHANAN *Remember the Red-Shouldered Hawk*. Putnam, 1994 [160p]
ISBN 0-399-22443-2 \$14.95
Reviewed from galleys Ad Gr. 5-7

Twelve-year-old John-too (so called to distinguish him from his father John) loves his grandmother, and he's shocked to realize, after Nanna moves in with his fam-

ily, that Alzheimer's disease is affecting her mind. His difficulty in dealing with her lapses is complicated by problems with his lifelong best friend: Brod seems more and more to be picking up the racism of his father, attacking a black schoolmate and playing neo-Nazi computer games—plus he and John-too like the same girl. The two plots don't really mesh; the subtler story of Nanna's deterioration is impeded by the more dramatic racism thread, which culminates in a Klan cross-burning at the house of John-too's Puerto Rican brother-in-law. The writing doesn't always flow smoothly, but it's sensitive in its exploration of John-too's grief, and readers will applaud John-too's winning of the fair Annajoy. The badly drawn cover art will reduce the browsing quotient. DS

TAMAR, ERIKA *The Things I Did Last Summer*. Harcourt, 1994 [256p]

Trade ed. ISBN 0-15-282490-1 \$10.95

Paper ed. ISBN 0-15-200020-8 \$3.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 9-12

Andy Szabo, of *It Happened at Cecilia's* (BCCB 3/89) and *The Truth about Kim O'Hara*, is spending the summer at a borrowed Long Island beach house, where his pregnant stepmother awaits the impending arrival of Andy's half-sibling in comparative peace and where his father comes to visit when he can get away from his restaurant. Soon after arriving, Andy discovers Susan, a beautiful older woman—twenty to Andy's seventeen—and falls in love with her despite her rich employers' (she says she's an au pair) strict restrictions on her social life. The young couple are romantic as well as sexy, but they're also sad: Tamar clearly foreshadows that Susan is deceiving Andy about her identity, but the adult truth, revealed when Andy attempts to rescue her from her "imprisonment," will surprise many readers. The subplots of Andy's budding journalism career at the local paper and the birth of his stepmother's baby counterpoint the main story well, and the characterizations are subtle and lively, especially of Andy's flaky and loving—and loved—stepmother Lorraine, his colorful newspaper boss, and unhappy, magnetic Susan. This has an M. E. Kerr flavor of irrevocable movement beyond childhood, and it's a well-written, absorbing story about first love and disillusionment. DS

TEMPLE, FRANCES *The Ramsay Scallop*. Jackson/Orchard, 1994 [336p]

Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08686-0 \$17.99

Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-06836-6 \$17.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 6-9

Long betrothed—by parental arrangement—to Thomas, the neighboring landowner's son who has just returned to England from a Crusade in 1299, fourteen-year-old Elenor has no wish to either marry or to bear children. A priest observes Elenor's reluctance, Thomas' restlessness, and the strains of family adjustment following all the Crusaders' return, and assigns the two young people a pilgrimage to unload the village sins at the shrine of Santiago de Compostela in Spain. The trip toughens Elenor, softens Thomas, and turns the two from enemies into friends who fall in love and chafe at their temporary vow of chastity. The journey-driven plot allows for an enormous amount of historical detail that never seems intrusive, although several scenes are obviously informed by twentieth-century attitudes of feminism and religious tolerance. There's also too large a cast to develop beyond functional roles, but the main characters are well drawn, and their relationship will involve readers with a bent for romantic historical fiction. BH

TRIPP, NATHANIEL *Thunderstorm!*; illus. by Juan Wijngaard. Dial, 1994 [48p]
Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-1366-5 \$15.89
Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-1365-7 \$15.99

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 3-5

Kids drawn in by Wijngaard's alluringly ominous cover painting of a towering thunderhead will find inside a natural suspense story, as the inhabitants of a small farm await a change in weather. Tripp focuses the information through three creatures—the farmer, a fox, and a hawk—with regular sights upwards into the amassing clouds. The watercolor paintings, moody and meticulous, provide the atmosphere while the text explains it; both employ the perspectives of the animal subjects to show how storms affect hunting (as the eagle hawk employs the warm updrafts for scouting), food-gathering (get that hay in, farmer Ben) and shelter-seeking (fox and kits have a near-miss with a lightning bolt). Information about how the storm forms, precipitation, and thunder and lightning are well-balanced with the drama on the ground, and there's a real sense of build-up that enhances both the story and the facts. RS

VAIL, RACHEL *Ever After*. Jackson/Orchard, 1994 [176p]
Library ed. ISBN 0-531-08688-7 \$15.99
Trade ed. ISBN 0-531-06838-2 \$15.95

Reviewed from galleys

R* Gr. 5-8

How does Vail do it? Whether it's school cliques (*Wonder*, BCCB 9/91), parental divorce (*Do-Over*, 12/92) or, as here, the troubles that come between best friends when a new summer friend comes along, she always seems to find a fresh way to see and hear (her ear is phenomenal) a tired topic. "I'm stressed," writes newly fourteen Molly in the journal she's received as a birthday gift from her best friend Vicky. There's a lot of reasons: Vicky doesn't like Molly's new (and rich and sophisticated) friend Grace, Molly has a crush on Vicky's big brother, the boy who used to "like" Molly now likes Grace, and Molly feels fat. Then she gets her period: "How is it possible that I will bleed for five days in a row and not die?" Summarized, it sounds like a teen-novel parody, but Vail makes it all live, right down to the tortuous, nagging verbal fights that girlfriends get into: "Sometimes I think it would be easier to be a guy. When Jason gets pissed at Freddy, he says, Freddy, that pissed me off, and maybe even hits him. Maybe they even get in a major fistfight, but then it's right back to armpit farts." Vicky's surprising betrayal—she's read Molly's journal, just like us—makes for a tough conclusion, as high school begins with the former-best friends ("She passed me at my locker today. I tried to blend into the metal") on their separate ways. RS

WIENER, LORI S., comp. *Be a Friend: Children Who Live with HIV Speak*; comp. by Lori S. Wiener, Aprille Best, and Philip A. Pizzo. Whitman, 1994 [40p]
ISBN 0-8075-0590-0 \$13.95

Reviewed from galleys

Ad Gr. 2-6

Drawings and writings by children with AIDS, HIV infection, or those with AIDS in their families comprise this collage of young reflections upon a terrible disease. The book is divided into three sections: I Wonder ("I wonder why some kids have to take medicine and others do not"), Living with HIV ("Dear God: If this was a joke, it wasn't very funny"), and Family, Friends, and AIDS ("I know I'll miss David when he goes, but I also know that he won't hurt any more"). The art is very childlike, even from the older kids, and while the individual pictures only

sometimes have an emotional impact, as a collection of real-live-kid documents, the total effect is telling. Although the book is not informative about AIDS in the way Hausherr's *Children and the AIDS Virus* (BCCB 6/89) and other titles are, its value lies in the way it will confront readers with how much like themselves and their families are the stories and feelings spoken here. Children's art and writings usually mean more to adults than to children, but AIDS and HIV claim kids' interest enough for them to identify with other kids' self-expression. RS

YORK, CAROL BEACH *The Key to the Playhouse*; illus. by John Speirs. Scholastic, 1994 [128p]

ISBN 0-590-46258-X \$13.95

Reviewed from galleys

R Gr. 3-5

The title makes the book sound like a mystery, but it's actually an update of Estes' *The Hundred Dresses*, with the roles of Peggy and Maddie being taken by cousins Alice Ann and Megan, and that of Wanda by Cissie, a chubby girl who lives down the road from the cousins' grandmother's house where the girls are spending two weeks' vacation. Alice Ann and Megan are thrilled when Gran gives them a key to lock their backyard playhouse. At first, they mean just to keep robbers away but soon discover it's even more fun to use the key to keep Cissie out: "When Cissie got there and began her knock-knock-knock, they stood just inside the door and held their hands over their mouths so Cissie wouldn't hear them giggling." The reading is easy and the message is clear but not pushy, with nobody, including the author, stepping in among the girls to straighten things out. Most kids have been on both sides of the excluding game and will be able to imagine themselves on either side of that door. There are also enough ordinary summer doings in the book that the story doesn't get too heavy. Reviewed from an unillustrated galley. RS



CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARDS 1994

The Newbery Medal will be awarded to Lois Lowry for *The Giver* (Houghton). The Newbery Honor Books are *Crazy Lady!* by Jane Leslie Conly (Geringer/HarperCollins), *Dragon's Gate* by Laurence Yep (HarperCollins), and *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery* by Russell Freedman (Clarion).

The Caldecott Medal will be awarded to Allen Say for *Grandfather's Journey* (Houghton). The Caldecott Honor Books are *Peppe the Lamplighter*, written by Elisa Bartone and illustrated by Ted Lewin (Lothrop), *In the Small, Small Pond* by Denise Fleming (Holt), *Raven* by Gerald McDermott (Harcourt), and *Yo? Yes!* by Chris Raschka (Jackson/Orchard).

The Coretta Scott King Award will be presented to Angela Johnson, author of *Toning the Sweep* (Jackson/Orchard) for writing and to Tom Feelings for *Soul Looks Back in Wonder* (Dial) for illustration. King Honor Books for writing are Joyce Carol Thomas' *Brown Honey in Broomwheat Tea* (HarperCollins) and Walter Dean Myers' *Malcolm X* (Scholastic). King Honor Books for illustration are *Brown Honey in Broomwheat Tea*, written by Joyce Carol Thomas and illustrated by Floyd Cooper (HarperCollins) and *Uncle Jed's Barbershop*, written by Margaree King Mitchell and illustrated by James Ransome (Simon).

The American publisher receiving the Mildred L. Batchelder Award for the most outstanding translation of a book originally published in a foreign language is Farrar, Straus & Giroux for Pilar Molina Llorente's *The Apprentice*. Honor books are *Anne Frank: Beyond the Diary* by Ruud van der Rol and Rian Verhoeven (Viking) and *The Princess in the Kitchen Garden* by Annemie and Margriet Heymans (Farrar).

The (G. K.) Hall Award for Library Literature will be given to Hazel Rochman's *Against Borders: Promoting Books for a Multicultural World* (Booklist/ALA).

The Scott O'Dell Award for historical fiction will be given to Paul Fleischman for *Bull Run* (Geringer/HarperCollins).

The Canadian Library Association's Best Book of the Year for Children is *Ticket to Curlew* by Celia Barker Lottridge (Groundwood). The Amelia Frances Howard-Gibbon Award for illustration goes to Paul Morin for *The Dragon's Pearl*, written by Julie Lawson (Clarion).

The Carnegie Medal was awarded to Anne Fine for *Flour Babies* (Little, Brown).

The Kate Greenaway Medal was awarded to Anthony Browne for *Zoo* (Knopf).

The 1995 May Hill Arbuthnot Lecture will be delivered by Leonard Everett Fisher.

The Margaret A. Edwards Award will be given to Walter Dean Myers.

NCTE's Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children goes to *Across America on an Emigrant Train* by Jim Murphy (Clarion); Honor Books include *To the Top of the World: Adventures with Arctic Wolves* by Jim Brandenburg (Walker) and *Making Sense: Animal Perception and Communication* by Bruce Brooks (Farrar).

NCTE's Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children goes to Barbara Esbensen.

Much of the above information was graciously provided by the Children's Book Council, which offers a materials brochure listing their many helpful publications. To receive this, send a request, enclosing 6" x 9" SASE with 2 oz. first-class postage, to the Children's Book Council, 568 Broadway, Suite 404, New York, NY, 10012.



SUBJECT AND USE INDEX

Keyed to *The Bulletin's* alphabetical arrangement by author, this index, which appears in each issue, can be used in three ways. Entries in regular type refer to subjects; entries in **bold type** refer to curricular or other uses; entries in ALL-CAPS refer to genres and appeals. In the case of subject headings, the subhead "stories" refers to books for the readaloud audience; "fiction," to those books intended for independent reading.

- | | |
|--|---|
| Adoption: Liptak | Birthdays—stories: Dorflinger |
| African Americans: Lewis-Ferguson | Books and reading—fiction: Lasky |
| African Americans—fiction: Bat-Ami; Cooper | Careers: Rowan |
| African Americans—stories: Anderson | Caribbean Islands—stories: Gershator |
| AIDS: Wiener | Chinese-Americans—fiction: Krensky; Namioka |
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| | Ecology: Bierhorst; Klass |
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Greene; Hoberman; Hutton;

Kimmel; Mennen; Minters;

Simon

Storytelling-stories: Lively

Time travel-fiction: Hahn; Nolan

Turkey: Dalokay

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Women's studies: Fireside; Rowan

World War II-fiction: Ackerman;

Ray





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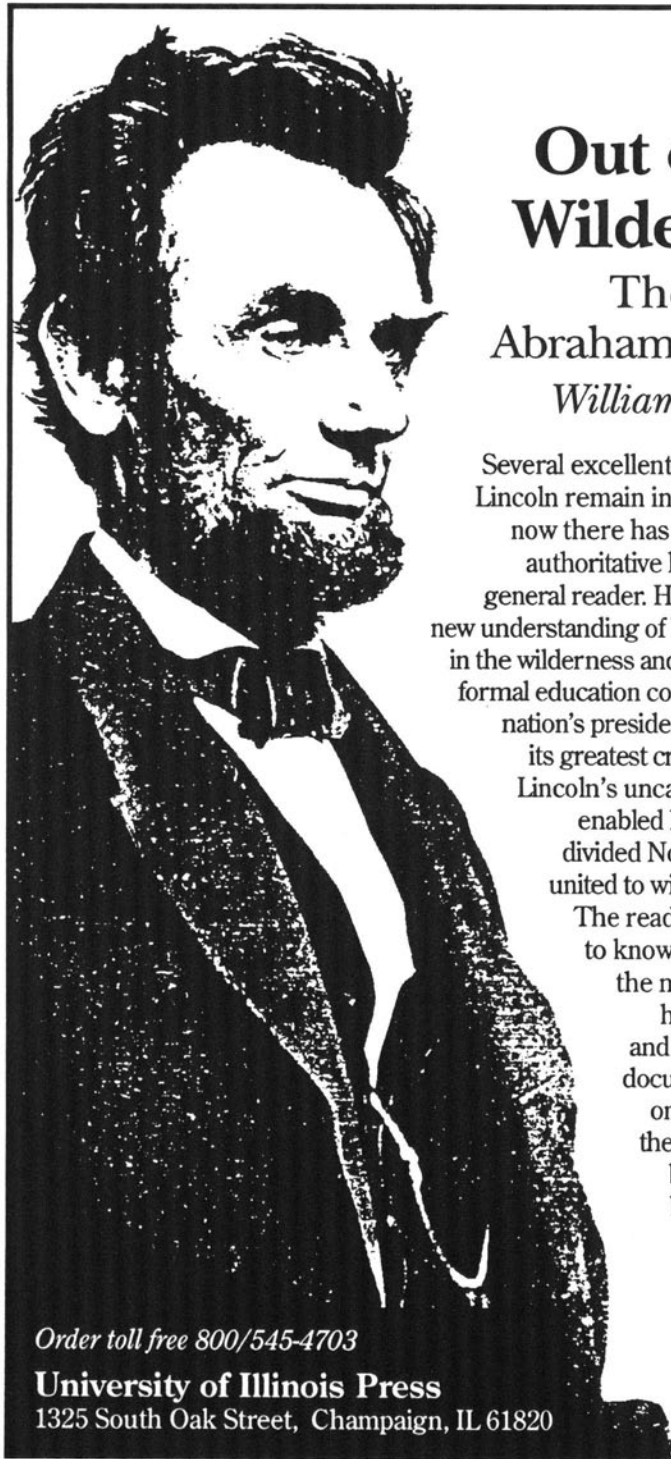
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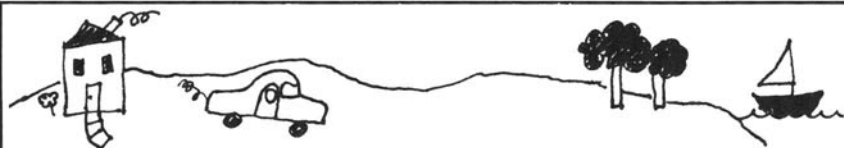
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(Proceedings of the 34th Annual

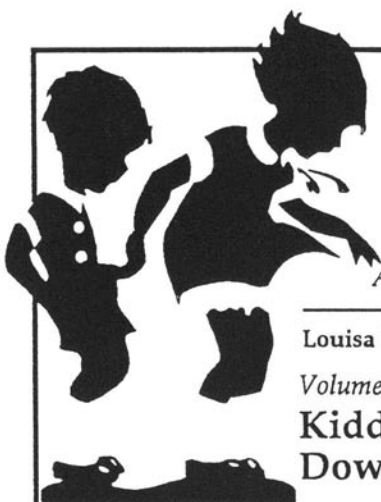
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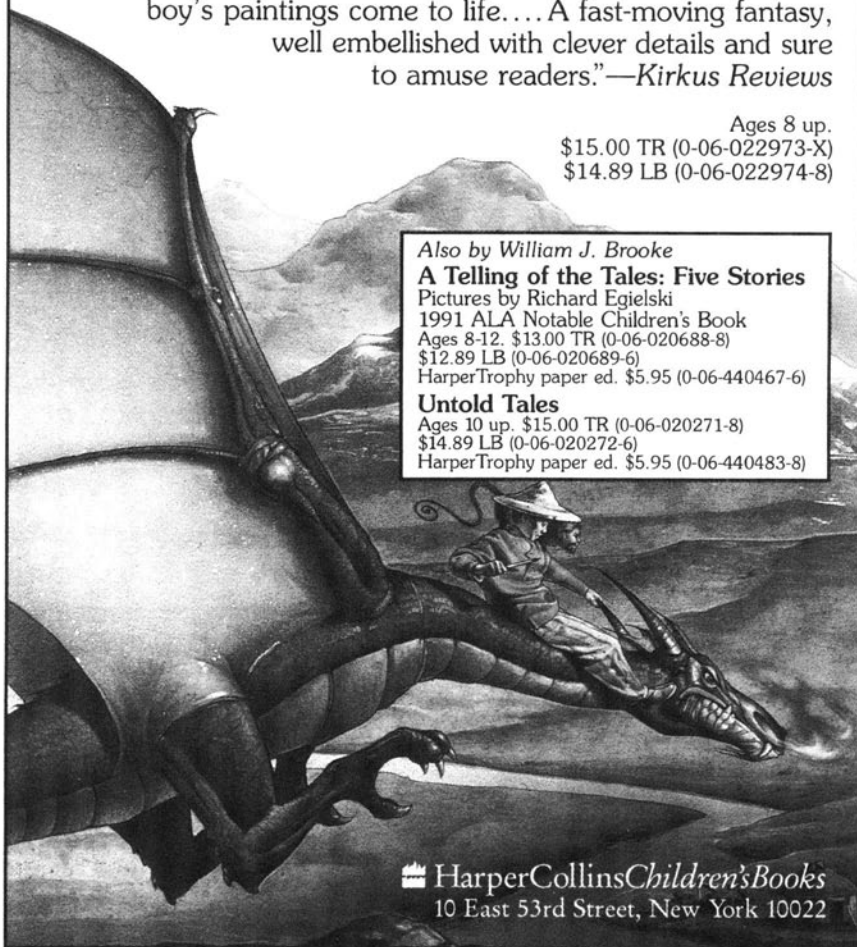
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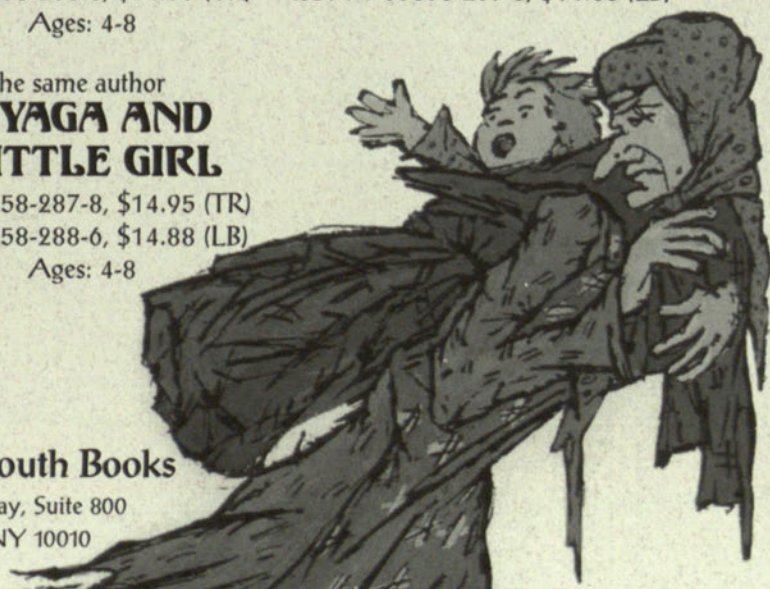
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